


Amendments to the Claims

Kindly amend claims 1, 3, 24, 34, 36, 57, 67-69, 71 & 92 and cancel claims 2, 6, 11, 35, 39, 44, 70, 74, 79 & 102 as set forth below. In compliance with revised 37 CFR 1.121, a complete listing of claims is provided herein. Changes in the amended claims are shown by underlining (for added matter) or strikethrough (for deleted matter).

1. (Currently Amended) A method of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said method comprising:

utilizing a public business trading hub in the exchange of one or more commodities, wherein a plurality of entities is associated with the exchange and the public business trading hub is independent of the plurality of entities; and

performing one or more selected business functions associated with the exchange of the one or more commodities via an automated trusted agent, wherein the one or more selected business functions include managing at least one of:

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- (i) one or more pricing terms associated with the exchange;
 - (ii) one or more contract terms associated with the exchange;
 - (iii) one or more strategic relationships associated with the exchange;
 - (iv) one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with the exchange; and
 - (v) one or more product schedules associated with the exchange, and

wherein at least one of the entities of the plurality of entities defines at least one of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v).

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 2, wherein the managing of one or more pricing terms includes masking at least one pricing term of the one or more pricing terms to shield the at least one pricing term from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the one or more entities include one or more contract manufacturers.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the one or more entities include one or more suppliers.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the performing enables protection of one or more contract terms associated with the exchange from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the protection includes shielding price from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one entity of said plurality of entities includes at least one contract manufacturer, and wherein the performing enables controlling allocation of commodities across the at least one contract manufacturer.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein multiple entities of said plurality of entities include multiple suppliers, and wherein the performing enables dividing an order for a plurality of commodities of the exchange among the multiple suppliers.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the automated trusted agent includes one or more tools utilized in performing the one or more selected business functions.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the one or more tools include at least one of a purchase order/supply order engine, linked pricing tables, and one or more supply/demand aggregation tools.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the automated trusted agent is coupled to the public business trading hub.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the automated trusted agent is a part of the public business trading hub.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the exchange is based on a buy/sell model.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein one entity of the plurality of entities is an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), and wherein said utilizing the public business trading hub comprises utilizing the public business trading hub by the OEM to obtain a product having at least a portion of the one or more commodities.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the automated trusted agent enables the OEM to retain control of one or more facets of the exchange.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the automated trusted agent enables the OEM to retain control of at least one of sensitive information, one or more business processes, and one or more relationships associated with the exchange.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said utilizing the public business trading hub comprises utilizing the public business trading hub in a networked environment.

21. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of entities comprises one or more contract manufacturers and one or more suppliers.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the performing one or more selected business functions associated with the exchange of the one or more commodities via the automated trusted agent comprises:

placing an order for the one or more commodities with at least one supplier of the one or more suppliers, the order representing a request from at least one contract manufacturer of the one or more contract manufacturers;

handling one or more invoices received from the at least one supplier; and

invoicing the at least one contract manufacturer requesting the one or more commodities.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the plurality of entities further comprises an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) requesting one or more products from the one or more contract manufacturers, and wherein the performing further comprises forwarding to the OEM a price differential, if any, resulting from a difference in the one or more invoices received from the at least one supplier and the invoicing of the at least one contract manufacturer.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said method comprising:

requesting by a first entity of a plurality of entities associated with the exchange to obtain one or more commodities of a product, said one or more commodities to be obtained from one or more second entities of the plurality of entities via a public business trading hub which is independent of the plurality of entities; and

using an automated trusted agent to interface between said first entity and said one or more second entities, wherein one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities are controlled by said automated trusted agent and are defined by at least one entity of the plurality of entities, and:

wherein the one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities include at least one of:

one or more pricing terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more contract terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more strategic relationships associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with obtaining said one or more commodities; and

one or more product schedules associated with obtaining said one or more commodities.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the one or more aspects include invoicing associated with the one or more commodities.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the first entity is a contract manufacturer and the one or more second entities are one or more suppliers.

27. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising placing an order for the product at said first entity, by a third entity.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein said third entity is an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), and wherein the automated trusted agent protects for the OEM one or more facets associated with the order.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the one or more facets include one or more contract terms.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the one or more contract terms include one or more price terms.

31. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the one or more facets include at least one of sensitive information, one or more business processes, and one or more relationships associated with obtaining the one or more commodities.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the automated trusted agent is a part of the public business trading hub.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the automated trusted agent is coupled to the public business trading hub.

34. (Currently Amended) A system of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said system comprising:

means for utilizing a public business trading hub in the exchange of one or more commodities, wherein a plurality of entities is associated with the exchange and the public business trading hub is independent of the plurality of entities; and

means for performing one or more selected business functions associated with the exchange of the one or more commodities via an automated trusted agent, wherein the one or more selected business functions include managing at least one of:

(i) one or more pricing terms associated with the exchange;

(ii) one or more contract terms associated with the exchange;

(iii) one or more strategic relationships associated with the exchange;

(iv) one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with the exchange; and

(v) one or more product schedules associated with the exchange, and

wherein at least one of the entities of the plurality of entities defines at least one of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v).

35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~34~~ 35, wherein the managing of one or more pricing terms includes masking at least one pricing term of the one or more pricing terms to shield the at least one pricing term from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

37. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the one or more entities include one or more contract manufacturers.

38. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the one or more entities include one or more suppliers.

39. (Canceled)

40. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein the means for performing enables protection of one or more contract terms associated with the exchange from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

41. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the protection includes shielding price from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

42. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein at least one entity of said plurality of entities includes at least one contract manufacturer, and wherein the means for performing enables controlling allocation of commodities across the at least one contract manufacturer.

43. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein multiple entities of said plurality of entities include multiple suppliers, and wherein the means for performing enables dividing an order for a plurality of commodities of the exchange among the multiple suppliers.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 34, wherein the automated trusted agent includes one or more tools utilized in performing the one or more selected business functions.

46. (Original) The system of claim 45, wherein the one or more tools include at least one of a purchase order/supply order engine, linked pricing tables, and one or more supply/demand aggregation tools.

47. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 34, wherein the automated trusted agent is coupled to the public business trading hub.

48. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 34, wherein the automated trusted agent is a part of the public business trading hub.

49. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein the exchange is based on a buy/sell model.

50. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 34, wherein one entity of the plurality of entities is an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), and wherein said means for utilizing the public business trading hub comprises means for utilizing the public business trading hub by the OEM to obtain a product having at least a portion of the one or more commodities.

51. (Original) The system of claim 50, wherein the automated trusted agent enables the OEM to retain control of one or more facets of the exchange.

52. (Original) The system of claim 51, wherein the automated trusted agent enables the OEM to retain control of at least one of sensitive information, one or more business processes, and one or more relationships associated with the exchange.

53. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 34, wherein said means for utilizing the public business trading hub comprises means for utilizing the public business trading hub in a networked environment.

54. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein the plurality of entities comprises one or more contract manufacturers and one or more suppliers.

55. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 54, wherein the means for performing one or more selected business trading functions associated with the exchange of the one or more commodities via the automated trusted agent comprises:

means for placing an order for the one or more commodities with at least one supplier of the one or more suppliers, the order representing a request from at least one contract manufacturer of the one or more contract manufacturers;

means for handling one or more invoices received from the at least one supplier;
and

means for invoicing the at least one contract manufacturer requesting the one or more commodities.

56. (Original) The system of claim 55, wherein the plurality of entities further comprises an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) requesting one or more products from the one or more contract manufacturers, and wherein the means for performing further comprises means for forwarding to the OEM a price differential, if any, resulting from a difference in the one or more invoices received from the at least one supplier and the invoicing of the at least one contract manufacturer.

57. (Currently Amended) A system of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said system comprising:

a first entity of a plurality of entities associated with the exchange to obtain one or more commodities of a product, said one or more commodities to be obtained from one or more second entities of the plurality of entities via a public business trading hub which is independent of the plurality of entities; and

an automated trusted agent to interface between said first entity and said one or more second entities, wherein one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities are controlled by said automated trusted agent and are defined by at least one entity of the plurality of entities, and:

wherein the one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities include at least one of:

one or more pricing terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more contract terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more strategic relationships associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with obtaining said one or more commodities; and

one or more product schedules associated with obtaining said one or more commodities.

58. (Original) The system of claim 57, wherein the one or more aspects include means for invoicing associated with the one or more commodities.

59. (Original) The system of claim 57, wherein the first entity is a contract manufacturer and the one or more second entities are one or more suppliers.

60. (Original) The system of claim 57, further comprising a third entity to place an order for the product at said first entity.

61. (Original) The system of claim 60, wherein said third entity is an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), and wherein the automated trusted agent protects for the OEM one or more facets associated with the order.

62. (Original) The system of claim 61, wherein the one or more facets include one or more contract terms.

63. (Original) The system of claim 62, wherein the one or more contract terms include one or more price terms.

64. (Original) The system of claim 61, wherein the one or more facets include at least one of sensitive information, one or more business processes, and one or more relationships associated with obtaining the one or more commodities.

65. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 57, wherein the automated trusted agent is a part of the public business trading hub.

66. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 57, wherein the automated trusted agent is coupled to the public business trading hub.

67. (Currently Amended) A system of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said system comprising:

a public business trading hub used in the exchange of one or more commodities, wherein a plurality of entities is associated with the exchange and the public business trading hub is independent of the plurality of entities; and

an automated trusted agent to perform one or more selected business functions associated with the exchange of the one or more commodities, wherein the one or more selected business functions include managing at least one of:

(i) one or more pricing terms associated with the exchange;

(ii) one or more contract terms associated with the exchange;

(iii) one or more strategic relationships associated with the exchange;

(iv) one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with the exchange; and

(v) one or more product schedules associated with the exchange, and

wherein at least one of the entities of the plurality of entities defines at least one of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v).

68. (Currently Amended) A system of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said system comprising:

means for requesting by a first entity of a plurality of entities associated with the exchange to obtain one or more commodities of a product, said one or more commodities to be obtained from one or more second entities of the plurality of entities via a public business trading hub which is independent of the plurality of entities; and

means for using an automated trusted agent to interface between said first entity and said one or more second entities, wherein one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities are controlled by said automated trusted agent and are defined by at least one entity of the plurality of entities, and:

wherein the one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities include at least one of:

one or more pricing terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more contract terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more strategic relationships associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with obtaining said one or more commodities; and

one or more product schedules associated with obtaining said one or more commodities.

69. (Currently Amended) At least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said method comprising:

utilizing a public business trading hub in the exchange of one or more commodities, wherein a plurality of entities is associated with the exchange and the public business trading hub is independent of the plurality of entities; and

performing one or more selected business functions associated with the exchange of the one or more commodities via an automated trusted agent, wherein the one or more selected business functions include managing at least one of:

(i) one or more pricing terms associated with the exchange;

(ii) one or more contract terms associated with the exchange;

(iii) one or more strategic relationships associated with the exchange;

(iv) one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with the exchange; and

(v) one or more product schedules associated with the exchange, and

wherein at least one of the entities of the plurality of entities defines at least one of (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v).

70. (Canceled)

71. (Currently Amended) The at least one program storage device of claim ~~69~~ 70, wherein the managing of one or more pricing terms includes masking at least one pricing term of the one or more pricing terms to shield the at least one pricing term from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

72. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 71, wherein the one or more entities include one or more contract manufacturers.

73. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 71, wherein the one or more entities include one or more suppliers.

74. (Canceled)

75. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein the performing enables protection of one or more contract terms associated with the exchange from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

76. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 75, wherein the protection includes shielding price from one or more entities of the plurality of entities.

77. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein at least one entity of said plurality of entities includes at least one contract manufacturer, and wherein the performing enables controlling allocation of commodities across the at least one contract manufacturer.

78. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein multiple entities of said plurality of entities include multiple suppliers, and wherein the performing enables dividing an order for a plurality of commodities of the exchange among the multiple suppliers.

79. (Canceled)

80. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein the automated trusted agent includes one or more tools utilized in performing the one or more selected business functions.

81. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 80, wherein the one or more tools include at least one of a purchase order/supply order engine, linked pricing tables, and one or more supply/demand aggregation tools.

82. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein the automated trusted agent is coupled to the public business trading hub.

83. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein the automated trusted agent is a part of the public business trading hub.

84. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein the exchange is based on a buy/sell model.

85. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein one entity of the plurality of entities is an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), and wherein said utilizing the public business trading hub comprises utilizing the public business trading hub by the OEM to obtain a product having at least a portion of the one or more commodities.

86. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 85, wherein the automated trusted agent enables the OEM to retain control of one or more facets of the exchange.

87. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 86, wherein the automated trusted agent enables the OEM to retain control of at least one of sensitive information, one or more business processes, and one or more relationships associated with the exchange.

88. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein said utilizing the public business trading hub comprises utilizing the public business trading hub in a networked environment.

89. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein the plurality of entities comprises one or more contract manufacturers and one or more suppliers.

90. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 89, wherein the performing one or more selected business functions associated with the exchange of the one or more commodities via the automated trusted agent comprises:

placing an order for the one or more commodities with at least one supplier of the one or more suppliers, the order representing a request from at least one contract manufacturer of the one or more contract manufacturers;

handling one or more invoices received from the at least one supplier; and

invoicing the at least one contract manufacturer requesting the one or more commodities.

91. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 90, wherein the plurality of entities further comprises an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) requesting one or more products from the one or more contract manufacturers, and wherein the performing further

comprises forwarding to the OEM a price differential, if any, resulting from a difference in the one or more invoices received from the at least one supplier and the invoicing of the at least one contract manufacturer.

92. (Currently Amended) At least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of facilitating the exchange of commodities, said method comprising:

requesting by a first entity of a plurality of entities associated with the exchange to obtain one or more commodities of a product, said one or more commodities to be obtained from one or more second entities of the plurality of entities via a public business trading hub which is independent of the plurality of entities; and

using an automated trusted agent to interface between said first entity and said one or more second entities, wherein one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities are controlled by said automated trusted agent and are defined by at least one entity of the plurality of entities, and:

wherein the one or more aspects associated with obtaining said one or more commodities include at least one of:

one or more pricing terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more contract terms associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more strategic relationships associated with obtaining said one or more commodities;

one or more business processes associated with supply and demand of commodities associated with obtaining said one or more commodities; and

one or more product schedules associated with obtaining said one or more commodities.

93. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 92, wherein the one or more aspects include invoicing associated with the one or more commodities.

94. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 92, wherein the first entity is a contract manufacturer and the one or more second entities are one or more suppliers.

95. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 92, wherein said method further comprises placing an order for the product at said first entity, by a third entity.

96. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 95, wherein said third entity is an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), and wherein the automated trusted agent protects for the OEM one or more facets associated with the order.

97. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 96, wherein the one or more facets include one or more contract terms.

98. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 97, wherein the one or more contract terms include one or more price terms.

99. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 96, wherein the one or more facets include at least one of sensitive information, one or more business processes, and one or more relationships associated with obtaining the one or more commodities.

100. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 92, wherein the automated trusted agent is a part of the public business trading hub.

101. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 92,
wherein the automated trusted agent is coupled to the public business trading hub.

102. (Canceled)

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